

Into the Shimmering World

By Angus Cerini

Final draft 13th August 2024

Excerpt for Victorian Premier's Literary Award, 20 Jan 2025

Acknowledgements

Into the Shimmering World was written on Taungurung Country. It was developed with Sydney Theatre Company on Gadigal Country.

Into the Shimmering World is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual people, places or events is coincidental.

Into the Shimmering World was first produced by Sydney Theatre Company at the Wharf 1 Theatre, Sydney, on 6 April 2024, with the following cast:

RAY	Colin Friels
FLOSS	Kerry Armstrong
MACKA/DOUG/STEPHEN	James O'Connell
OLD MATE	Bruce Spence
SAM/MAY	Renee Lim

Director, Paige Rattray
Dramaturgy, Paige Rattray
Additional Dramaturgy, Ruth Little
Designer, David Fleischer
Lighting Designer, Nick Schlieper
Composer & Sound Designer, Clemence Williams
Movement Director, Frances Rings
Assistant Director, Nicole Pingon
Voice & Text Coach, Charmian Gradwell
Stage Manager, Sarah Smith

CHARACTERS

In order of appearance:

RAY	A farmer
FLOSS	His wife
MACKA	The knacker
DOUG	Police officer
STEPHEN	The son of Floss and Ray
SAM	Landcare organiser
MAY	Home Care assistant

SETTING

The action occurs in and around a farmhouse kitchen.

THE USE OF ITALICS

Italics describe stage directions, but sometimes denote other things. Italicised text should generally remain unspoken.

The Gulag

Stephen has taken Ray to look at the local aged care place.

RAY The gulag.

STEPHEN Wasn't that bad.

RAY What are you supposed to do in a place like that?

STEPHEN Well there's the other one.

RAY They're all made of the same stuff.

STEPHEN Come on.

RAY Gruel.

STEPHEN Not that bad Dad.

RAY All those folks sitting lined up at those awful tables sitting there dying.

STEPHEN They have activities and all sorts of things don't be so dramatic.

RAY Answers no.

STEPHEN Dad come on.

RAY Come on what?

STEPHEN You won't be able to stay here.

RAY Course I will.

STEPHEN You're not taking care of yourself.

RAY Who says?

STEPHEN Dad.

RAY Son.

STEPHEN Dad.

RAY Son.

STEPHEN Come on.

RAY Answers no.

STEPHEN Well you might not get a choice in the end.

RAY Who says?

STEPHEN You want to be bundled off without a say in it?

RAY I'll bundle you off.

STEPHEN You know what I mean.

RAY You're making me angry.

STEPHEN You might have a fall or something.

RAY You might have a fall or something.

STEPHEN What am I supposed to do?

RAY Shut your mouth about it all and put the kettle on.

STEPHEN You're just going to ignore it?

RAY Yep.

STEPHEN That's sensible that is.

RAY Yep.

STEPHEN Why you being such a stubborn bastard?

RAY Why you being such a pain in the backside. You so worried move in here make sure I don't have one of these falls you keep talking about.

STEPHEN I can't do that.

RAY No? Then shut up.

STEPHEN The kids.

RAY Would bloody love it here.

STEPHEN Dad. We live four hours away.

RAY Right. Well best you get started then so you can make it home before night falls and hits you on the head.

*The kid leaves,
the wife replaces him.*

FLOSS You don't think you was a bit harsh?

RAY Don't care.

FLOSS No I gathered that.

RAY Or I do care but just wanted to sting him a little bit.

FLOSS Was it fun Ray?

RAY No.

FLOSS No.

RAY There's no light in here anymore Floss

FLOSS I know

RAY I can't seem to find a way through

FLOSS No

RAY I miss you most terribly

FLOSS I'll warm a soup up for you.

RAY Not the one with peas?

FLOSS Yes that one.

RAY You know I hate peas.

FLOSS I know you hate peas.

RAY Then why do you always make the one with peas?

FLOSS Because I like peas and if you want to make your own dinner then you can make that without peas but if you want me to make it then you can have it with peas, as I like it, or you can go without, or some other option you might configure for yourself.

RAY Right.

FLOSS Right.

But Floss has somehow become the Home-Care Assistant May

RAY I don't like peas.

MAY You didn't say.

RAY You didn't ask.

MAY Oh for heavens sakes you're not helpless Ray.

He looks at her.

RAY Well I don't like peas.

MAY I'll make a note of it.

RAY Thank you.